

## Soft skills in social and humanities education of the digital age: philosophical and educational dimension

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The article offers a philosophical and educational analysis of the phenomenon of soft skills within the context of socio-humanitarian education in the digital age. The relevance of the study is determined by the profound transformations of the contemporary educational space driven by digitalization, globalization processes, and changes in the nature of social and professional interaction. The paper substantiates the thesis that soft skills cannot be reduced to a set of applied or purely instrumental competencies oriented exclusively toward labor market demands. Instead, they are conceptualized as a multidimensional socio-cultural phenomenon associated with the formation of humanitarian rationality, value-based reflection, ethical responsibility, and the capacity for reflective communication. The study demonstrates that under conditions of the digital transformation of education, there is a growing need to reconsider the role of socio-humanitarian knowledge as a space for the development of critical thinking, communicative competence, emotional intelligence, empathy, and moral sensitivity. Socio-humanitarian disciplines are viewed as a key resource for shaping responsible agency among higher education students, enabling reflexive interaction in contexts of digital communication, information overload, and increasing ethical challenges. The methodological framework of the research is grounded in philosophical and educational analysis, interdisciplinary and axiological approaches, as well as empirical research methods aimed at identifying the potential of socio-humanitarian disciplines in fostering soft skills among higher education students. Based on theoretical reflection and empirical findings, the article substantiates the significance of socio-humanitarian education as a determining factor in the development of social maturity, professional adaptability, and the capacity for responsible participation in public life within a digital society. The study concludes by emphasizing the necessity of integrating a philosophical and value-oriented

### KEYWORDS

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### Introduction

In today's world, which is undergoing profound transformations driven by digitalization, globalization, and hybrid social processes, the development of soft skills has emerged as a key issue within the philosophy of education and social theory. Changes in the spheres of work, education, and communication necessitate a rethinking of traditional conceptions of professional competence, success, and social adaptation. In this context, the capacity for critical thinking, ethical reflection, and interpersonal interaction becomes a decisive factor in professional effectiveness.

The digital age is shaping a new educational paradigm centered on a human-oriented approach that emphasizes the development of social and emotional intelligence, reflexivity, and responsibility. At the same time, these qualities cannot be fully cultivated solely through purely instrumental forms of knowledge devoid of a value dimension. Their ontological and ethical foundations are rooted in the humanities and social sciences, which aim to interpret the human dimension of education and culture. The problem lies in the widening gap between the declarative recognition of the importance of soft skills and the fragmentary, unsystematic nature of their development in contemporary

higher education. Despite existing research, a philosophical and educational analysis of soft skills as a holistic phenomenon – intertwined with humanitarian rationality, value reflection, and the ethics of a digital society – remains insufficiently developed.

In this context, it is particularly relevant to conceptualize humanities and social sciences education as a space for fostering not only professional competencies but also social maturity, responsibility, and humanity in the context of digital transformation. This underscores the need for a theoretical and empirical analysis of the potential of humanities and social science disciplines in developing the soft skills of modern specialists.

Soft skills are a subject of significant scientific interest in contemporary interdisciplinary research, driven by the transformation of socio-economic processes, the digitalization of education, and the increasing demands for professional and personal competence. Numerous scholars, including K. Koval (2015), O. Hlazunova et al. (2019), T. Kochubei and Yu. Tkachuk (2021), H. Meshko and O. Meshko (2021), N. Kanyosa and M. Hordiychuk (2022), O. Vasylenko et al. (2024), S. Hanaba (2023) have explored the essence and structure of soft skills. Their works substantiate the im-

portance of these skills for professional self-actualization, social adaptation, and enhancing individual competitiveness. These researchers emphasize the role of soft skills in fostering a communicative culture, critical and analytical thinking, emotional intelligence, leadership, and self-development capacity. Furthermore, they highlight the necessity of their purposeful development within the educational process, particularly through the integration of the humanities and social sciences and the implementation of a competence-based approach in higher education.

A comprehensive analysis of soft skills within the digital environment is provided by A. Kravchenko et al. (2025). Based on sociological data, the authors reveal how technology impacts the development of communication, emotional intelligence, leadership, and self-management. They argue that digital tools, virtual simulators, interactive platforms, and gamification create novel opportunities for personal growth in the digital age. The relevance of integrating digital educational technologies is further supported by O. Rohulska and O. Mahdiuk (2023), who demonstrate the efficacy of interactive and multimedia tools in developing students' communicative, presentation, and social skills within a digital learning environment.

In their study, O. Lobodynska and O. Hrydzuk (2020) examine the essence of soft skills in the context of graduate competitiveness. Based on empirical sociological research, they analyze students' perceptions of the importance of these skills and the role of the educational environment in their formation. The authors conclude that curriculum enhancement should focus on the comprehensive development of soft skills through social and humanitarian disciplines. Such disciplines foster intellectual growth, broaden worldviews, and enhance motivation for self-development, while cultivating essential qualities such as systems thinking, adaptability, responsibility, and emotional self-regulation (Lobodynska, Hrydzuk, 2020:120).

The philosophical and educational dimensions of this issue are addressed by S. Kutsepal and M. Liubchenko (2024), who regard soft skills as pivotal factors for success in an information-driven digital society. Their focus remains on critical thinking and emotional intelligence as core socio-humanitarian competencies necessary for professional and personal realization. They underscore the escalating importance of soft skills amidst digitalization, the rise of artificial intelligence, and the transformation of the labor market.

In summary, the literature review indicates a consistent trend toward recognizing soft skills as a cornerstone of professional training in the digital era. Research confirms that fostering these skills requires a systematic, interdisciplinary, and practice-oriented approach. Their integration into curricula via the humanities and digital technologies is a prerequisite for improving the quality of higher education. However, despite the extensive literature, the development and assessment of soft skills within socio-humanitarian education remain insufficiently systematized, necessitating further theoretical and empirical investigation tailored to specific educational programs and professional fields.

The **purpose of this article** is to analyze the role of humanities and social sciences education in fostering soft skills and to identify the specific features of their integration into the educational process in the context of digital transformation. To achieve this objective, the following tasks were addressed: to synthesize scholarly approaches to understanding soft skills and their significance for professional training; to outline the role of humanities and social science disciplines in the development of key soft skills;

and to evaluate the results of an empirical study on the effectiveness of the "Soft Skills Technologies" course.

### Research methods

The methodological basis of the study is a synthesis of interdisciplinary, systemic, and axiological approaches, which enables a comprehensive understanding of the phenomenon of soft skills within humanities and social sciences education in the digital age. Within this paradigm, the analysis of soft skills is grounded in several complementary philosophical and educational concepts.

An important philosophical foundation of the study is Jürgen Habermas's concept of communicative rationality, in which rationality is understood not as instrumental control, but as the capacity of individuals to achieve mutual understanding, engage in reasoned dialogue, and reach consensus through communicative action (Habermas, 1984). In this context, such qualities as the ability to listen attentively, articulate well-grounded arguments, consider the perspectives of others, take responsibility for one's own statements, and adhere to ethical norms of communication constitute the core of contemporary soft skills. The application of this concept in digital education makes it possible to critically reflect on the challenges of online interaction, the algorithmisation of communication, and the risks of depersonalisation of social relations, thereby emphasising the importance of humanities education as a space for fostering responsible communicative competence.

An equally significant conceptual framework is the capabilities approach proposed by Martha Nussbaum (2011), according to which personal development is understood not merely in terms of efficiency or productivity, but as the expansion of individuals' real opportunities to think, act, interact, and live a dignified life. From this perspective, soft skills emerge as fundamental human capabilities – such as critical thinking, empathy, social participation, responsible decision-making, and self-reflection – without which full self-realisation in a digital society is impossible. In this sense, humanities and social sciences education performs not a utilitarian but an emancipatory function, creating conditions for the development of human dignity, autonomy, and social responsibility.

These philosophical frameworks are complemented by a humanistic approach, which allows soft skills to be conceptualised as manifestations of personal development, self-awareness, and moral maturity. The sociocultural approach, in turn, highlights the influence of cultural context and the educational environment on personal development, emphasising the role of social interaction, teamwork, and humanities-based practices in higher education. In addition, a digital competence – oriented approach is employed, emphasising the relationship between soft skills, digital communication, critical thinking in digital environments, and ethical interaction with information systems.

To verify the theoretical propositions, the study employed a quantitative empirical research strategy using a questionnaire survey. The online survey, conducted via Google Forms, ensured the anonymity of respondents and corresponded to the logic of the digitalisation of the educational process. The research instruments made it possible not only to assess the level of soft skills development, but also to identify students' expectations regarding the improvement of the content of humanities and social sciences disciplines.

**Results and Discussion**

In the current conditions of globalisation, rapid technological development, and continuous innovation, the traditional view of the factors determining professional success is undergoing significant transformation. Whereas highly specialised technical knowledge and skills (hard skills) were previously considered the primary indicator of a specialist’s competitiveness, so-called soft skills are now gaining increasing importance.

The term soft skills refer to universal, interdisciplinary competencies encompassing interpersonal communication, emotional intelligence, critical thinking, teamwork, adaptability, and other qualities that enable effective interaction in social and professional environments. These skills are cross-professional in nature, as they are not confined to a specific field or occupation but remain relevant across diverse areas of labour and social interaction. According to M. Robles (2012), soft skills are personal qualities, attributes, talents, or levels of enthusiasm for professional activity that distinguish an individual from others with similar technical skills and competencies.

The importance of soft skills manifests itself at all stages of personal and professional development, including education, career advancement, leadership formation, and the achievement of personal maturity. They constitute an integral component of contemporary professional competence and represent one of the key factors enabling adaptation to changes in the socio-cultural and economic environment. Educational institutions and employers increasingly recognise the priority of developing such competencies as critical thinking, effective communication, leadership, emotional intelligence, teamwork, and adaptability. These competencies are essential for successful professional advancement in complex environments and contribute to the formation of sustainable social relationships. Possession of such skills by young professionals not only ensures effective performance of professional duties but also enhances their capacity for creative problem-solving, constructive interaction, and successful adaptation to new social and professional challenges.

The range of soft skills encompasses a broad spectrum of competencies that differ in content and complexity of acquisition. While some can be developed with relatively limited effort, others require long-term, systematic, and purposeful self-development. At the same time, establishing a definitive ranking of soft skills is challenging due to their multidimensional nature and dependence on specific professional contexts. Accordingly, lists of the most in-demand soft

skills are typically formed on the basis of analytical data, generalised experience, and expert assessments.

Soft skills may also be conceptualised as a set of intangible personal characteristics and socially significant qualities that include individual attitudes, habits, and value orientations, enabling individuals to act effectively across various professional and social contexts. These include empathy, leadership, responsibility, integrity, stable self-esteem, self-regulation, motivation, flexibility, communication abilities, time management, and informed decision-making, which confirms their universal and cross-professional character (Lobodynska, Hydzuk, 2020:118).

According to Y. Drozdova and O. Dubinina, key soft skills include communication abilities, teamwork capacity, time management, flexibility and adaptability, openness to change, leadership qualities, as well as a range of personal characteristics related to interpersonal interaction. Among these, the authors highlight career planning and self-management, creative and critical thinking, emotional intelligence, ethical behaviour, honesty, patience, perseverance, self-confidence, respect for others, and stress resilience (Drozdova, Dubinina, 2020:33). Expanding this list, H. Meshko and O. Meshko emphasise self-organisation, information management skills, punctuality, diplomatic competence, the ability to solve complex professional tasks, friendliness, positivity, situational awareness, responsibility, and resilience (Meshko & Meshko, 2021:268).

The relevance of these theoretical positions is reflected in real professional practice. For instance, Jon McNab, Deputy Director of NonStop Consulting, emphasises that soft skills play a decisive role in professional effectiveness. He identifies ten of the most in-demand soft skills, including communication, teamwork, adaptability, problem-solving, leadership, emotional intelligence, time management, creativity, networking, and cultural competence (NonStop Consulting, n.d.).

Similar trends are confirmed by the recruitment service CSG, which identifies the most relevant soft skills in 2024 as communication and leadership abilities, critical thinking and problem-solving, teamwork, adaptability, effective time management, as well as emotional intelligence and empathy (Child & Temple, n.d.).

A study conducted by the expert and analytical centre of the HR portal grc.ua also demonstrates a shift in employers’ priorities in candidate selection. A comparative analysis of data from November 2021 and July 2022 (Fig. 1) indicates the sustained importance of responsibility, teamwork, communication skills, and result orientation.

No.	November 2021	July 2022
1	Responsibility	Responsibility
2	Teamwork skills	Attentiveness
3	Networking skills	Tactfulness
4	<b>Communication skills</b>	Teamwork skills
5	Attentiveness	<b>Communication skills</b>
6	Punctuality	<b>Stress resilience</b>
7	Result orientation	Result orientation
8	Accuracy	Analytical skills
9	Organisational skills	Self-management
10	Tactfulness	Multitasking

Fig. 1. Changes in the demand for key soft skills in job vacancies according to grc.ua data (2021–2022)

At the same time, new competencies – analytical skills, self-organisation, and multitasking – entered the top ten in 2022, reflecting increased demands for candidates' ability to operate effectively under conditions of high information intensity and multifunctionality (*Yevropeiska Biznes Asotsiatsiia, 2022*). Changes in the skills ranking also point to the growing significance of stress resilience, tactfulness, and attentiveness as responses to heightened psychological pressure under conditions of military conflict and uncertainty about the future.

The World Economic Forum's (WEF) report *The Future of Jobs Report-2025* emphasises that the key competencies of the future are formed at the intersection of technological and humanitarian dimensions, where soft skills occupy a leading position alongside digital literacy and analytical thinking. According to the employer survey, the most in-demand skills in 2025 include analytical thinking (69%), resilience, flexibility and adaptability (67%), leadership and social influence (61%), creative thinking (57%), motivation and self-awareness (52%), as well as empathy and active listening (50%) (*World Economic Forum, 2025*).

WEF analysts stress that in the context of the widespread implementation of artificial intelligence and automation, soft skills acquire strategic importance, as they ensure effective social interaction, adaptability, decision-making, and leadership in a dynamic professional environment. Unlike many technical skills, social and human-centred competencies are difficult or impossible to automate, which makes them a key factor in the long-term competitiveness of future professionals (*World Economic Forum, 2025*).

Analytical reviews interpreting the WEF report also highlight the growing orientation of the labour market towards a hybrid competency model that integrates hard and soft skills. Teamwork, adaptability, emotional intelligence, creativity, and interpersonal communication are expected to remain highly relevant at least until 2030 (*World Economic Forum, 2025*). These findings confirm the necessity of systematically embedding soft skills development into professional training programmes, particularly through social sciences and humanities, which play a crucial role in shaping human capital under conditions of digital transformation in education and employment.

Similar approaches are reflected in the education policy of the European Union, where a range of strategic documents promotes innovative teaching methods aimed at developing soft skills, especially those related to digital and technological activities. For this purpose, the European Skills, Competences, Qualifications and Occupations (ESCO) classification has been developed, encompassing more than three thousand relevant and in-demand skills (*Hanaba, 2023: 27*).

Despite the widespread recognition of the importance of soft skills for professional and personal development, the traditional model of university education in Ukraine continues to focus primarily on the formation of technical and theoretical knowledge. As noted by T. Kochubei and Y. Tkachuk, higher education institutions remain oriented toward "equipping" students with theoretical knowledge and developing skills directly related to the professional domain, namely hard skills, while communication skills, responsibility, initiative, creativity, teamwork abilities, project management skills, and interaction across different hierarchical levels are often developed fragmentarily or remain outside the scope of targeted educational attention (*Kochubei & Tkachuk, 2021:44*). This approach leads to an imbalance between academic training and the actual demands of the contemporary labour market. As a result,

graduates, despite demonstrating high academic achievement, frequently encounter difficulties in adapting to professional environments in which effective interpersonal interaction, decision-making, and teamwork are becoming increasingly important. At the same time, Ukrainian researchers emphasise the need to shift the focus of the educational process from the exclusive development of hard skills toward the integrated formation of soft skills, complemented by digital skills as a basic set of competencies for specialists in the context of a networked digital society (*Kochubei & Tkachuk, 2021*).

Digital transformation significantly reshapes the logic of contemporary education, prompting a shift from a knowledge-acquisition paradigm to a competency-based paradigm, in which not only the volume and content of knowledge but also students' ways of thinking, communicating, and interacting become crucial. In this context, humanities education performs a mediating function by facilitating the harmonisation of the technological and human dimensions of the educational process. It is precisely within the framework of humanities disciplines that digital ethics, emotional intelligence in digital communication, critical thinking about digital media, and intercultural competence are developed – competencies that are essential for individuals' responsible participation in a globalised networked environment.

In view of this, the humanitarian and socio-humanitarian components of higher education gain particular relevance as key factors in the formation of soft skills. Unlike the natural and technical sciences, which are primarily oriented toward the cognition of objective regularities, the social sciences and humanities focus on the individual, society, culture, and the dynamics of their interaction. These disciplines create an educational environment conducive to the development of flexible skills necessary for effective professional and social activity under conditions of complex and rapidly changing reality. At the same time, humanities education has the potential to become a locus for the preservation and restoration of humanity in a digitalised world, ensuring a value-based and ethical balance between knowledge, technology, and culture.

The study of academic courses such as philosophy, logic, history, sociology, political science, psychology, cultural studies, philology, and ethics enables students to gain a deeper understanding of human behaviour, social processes, cultural differences, and moral and ethical dilemmas. As a result, critical thinking, emotional intelligence, interpersonal communication skills, and a value-oriented worldview are formed – components that today constitute the foundation of highly demanded soft skills and ensure young professionals' readiness to adapt to dynamic socioeconomic changes.

As researchers note, the social sciences and humanities provide not only knowledge about society in its historical and contemporary dimensions but also contribute to the formation of a strategic vision of its future. They play a decisive role in building and sustaining democratic institutions, enhance understanding of the functioning of economic systems, and foster critical reflection on the consequences of global processes such as industrialisation, urbanisation, and demographic change. Moreover, these disciplines help individuals address existential questions, comprehend global challenges related to stability, well-being, and peace, and promote mutual understanding through dialogue, cooperation, and a humanistic approach to interaction with others (*Tarassenko, 2023:131*).

Let us consider how socio-humanitarian disciplines contribute to the formation and development of core soft skills among students. In particular, disciplines such as philosophy, logic, history, sociology, and political science create a foundation for the development of critical thinking and analytical abilities. This occurs through the analysis of philosophical, historical, and socio-political primary sources; the evaluation of the logical coherence of arguments; the identification of manipulative techniques; the comparison of alternative viewpoints; and the establishment of cause-and-effect relationships. As noted by N. Khamitov (2025), philosophy cultivates a culture of conceptual thinking and the worldview subjectivity of the individual – that is, the ability to independently reflect on values, meanings, and principles of action – which constitutes a necessary precondition for critical and responsible thinking in contemporary society. Active student engagement in analysis, discussion, and reflection thus contributes to the development of critical thinking, systems analysis, and well-argued positions, which are key components of the flexible skill set required of modern professionals (Babina & Krasilnikova, 2023).

The development of creativity takes place through the study of a range of socio-humanitarian and arts-related disciplines that stimulate imagination, divergent thinking, openness to novelty, and the ability to generate alternative approaches to problem-solving. Contemporary research confirms that creativity is closely linked to the development of emotional intelligence and is fostered within reflective and interdisciplinary learning environments (Caballero-García et al., 2025; Akpur, 2024). In this context, philosophy promotes abstract and conceptual thinking, the ability to pose non-trivial questions, critically reassess established assumptions, and generate new meanings, all of which are essential prerequisites for creative activity. Cultural studies contribute to the development of intercultural sensitivity and awareness of the diversity of cultural codes and creative practices, while art history familiarises students with various artistic styles and forms, enhancing their capacity to interpret symbols and construct new semantic frameworks based on historical experience.

The development of emotional intelligence and empathy is facilitated by the study of psychology, sociology, ethics, and philosophy, which focus on the analysis of the inner world of the individual and patterns of human interaction. Psychological approaches foster emotional self-awareness and self-regulation skills, while sociology enhances understanding of the social conditioning of emotions and the mechanisms of interpersonal interaction. Philosophy and ethics, in turn, provide a reflective framework for engaging with moral and ethical dilemmas and recognising responsibility for one's actions, which constitutes the foundation of empathic thinking. Empirical studies in recent years confirm that a high level of emotional intelligence positively correlates with students' academic achievement, psychological well-being, and capacity for creative self-expression (Nannings et al., 2025).

The formation of teamwork and collaboration skills is supported by disciplines that examine social structure and political interaction, particularly sociology, political science, and history. These fields enable students to comprehend the principles underlying the functioning of social groups, leadership mechanisms, the role of the individual within the collective, and the significance of collective responsibility. The analysis of historical and contemporary models of social interaction fosters the ability to cooperate and resolve conflicts constructively. In this regard, J. Habermas's

(1984) theory of communicative action emphasises the importance of rational dialogue, mutual recognition, and consensus-building as the foundation of effective teamwork and collaborative interaction.

Adaptability and cognitive flexibility are formed through the study of history, cultural studies, and sociology by fostering an understanding of sociocultural changes across different historical periods, analysing transformations of values and norms, and familiarising students with strategies for adapting to new social conditions. The historical approach enables awareness of the variability of social reality, while cultural analysis reveals the plurality of models for responding to contemporary global challenges. In this context, Z. Bauman's concept of liquid modernity emphasises the necessity of cognitive flexibility and openness to change as key competencies of the modern professional (Bauman, 2000). Research in the field of students' socio-emotional development also confirms that adaptability is directly related to the level of emotional intelligence and the interdisciplinary nature of the educational environment (Nannings et al., 2025).

At the same time, the effective development of soft skills within socio-humanitarian education requires a shift from predominantly passive knowledge acquisition to active, experiential learning. Among the most effective educational practices are debate clubs and interdisciplinary projects that foster critical thinking and argumentation; service learning, through which students engage in solving real social problems by integrating theory and practice; the use of collaborative online platforms to enhance teamwork and digital communication skills; and psychological training in emotional intelligence aimed at developing empathy and stress resilience.

Thus, socio-humanitarian disciplines not only create a value- and meaning-oriented foundation for the development of soft skills but also require the purposeful pedagogical integration of appropriate practices into the educational process. Theoretical generalisations and findings from previous studies convincingly demonstrate that the effective formation of flexible skills is possible only through their systematic incorporation into educational programmes, taking into account the specific features of the digital transformation of education and the labour market. In this context, the development and implementation of specialised courses aimed at the comprehensive cultivation of students' social, communicative, and personal competencies become particularly important.

As an illustrative example, the State University of Trade and Economics introduced an elective course entitled *Soft Skills Technologies*, designed to develop students' key social, communicative, and personal skills. Upon completion of the course, an empirical sociological study was conducted to assess its effectiveness, the relevance of the acquired soft skills, and their significance for students' professional training. The study employed a quantitative strategy of empirical analysis using a questionnaire survey method, which made it possible to identify students' general evaluations, attitudes, and reflective judgements regarding the development of soft skills during the learning process. The sociological survey involved 41 students enrolled in the programmes *Marketing*, *Sociology*, and *Computer Science*.

Empirical data were collected using a structured author-designed questionnaire consisting of 12 closed-ended and semi-open-ended questions organised into several logical blocks:

- assessment of overall impressions of the course (level of satisfaction, alignment with expectations, and practical value);
- assessment of the development of soft skills, including effective communication, self-motivation, creative thinking, emotional intelligence, leadership, teamwork, decision-making, self-presentation, adaptability, and inclusivity;
- awareness of the role of soft skills in professional training and in the context of the digital transformation of society;
- a reflective block containing open-ended questions on the most useful course topics and potential ways to improve the course;
- a socio-demographic block recording respondents' field of study.

The survey was conducted after the completion of the course, which enabled students to provide a holistic and well-considered evaluation of their learning experience. Participation in the study was voluntary and anonymous and did not affect academic assessment outcomes, thereby minimising potential response bias.

The obtained results indicate a high level of positive student perception of the course. An overwhelming majority of respondents evaluated the course as "very positive" (65.9%) or "rather positive" (29.3%), resulting in an overall approval rate exceeding 95%. According to most respondents, the course content fully (65.9%) or largely (26.8%) met their expectations, which confirms the relevance of soft skills development to the current needs of contemporary students. The average score for the overall practical value of the course, measured on a ten-point scale, was 8.68, indicating its high applied significance, particularly in the context of preparing future professionals for the digital labour market, where social, communicative, and emotional competencies play a decisive role.

An important complement to the overall course evaluation is the analysis of the effectiveness of instructional formats, which allows for a more precise identification of factors contributing to students' positive perceptions of the

discipline. Survey results demonstrate a clear student preference for active and practice-oriented learning formats. Practical classes were rated as the most effective (85.4%), reflecting students' strong demand for the direct application of knowledge, skills training, and the alignment of the educational process with real professional contexts.

Group discussions ranked second in terms of perceived effectiveness (70.7%), highlighting the importance of dialogical learning, exchange of perspectives, and the development of argumentative and communicative competencies. Team-based work also received high ratings (65.9%) and was perceived by students as an effective tool for fostering collaboration skills, leadership, and shared responsibility for collective outcomes. Moderately high levels of support were recorded for training exercises (19 responses; 46.3%) and presentations and self-presentation activities (17 responses; 41.5%). These formats contribute to the development of public speaking skills, self-confidence, and self-reflection; however, they were perceived as less universally effective compared to practical and group-based forms of learning.

In contrast, reflective tasks (31.7%) and lectures (26.8%) received the lowest effectiveness ratings. This finding indicates the limited effectiveness of passive or predominantly individual learning formats in the context of soft skills development, which inherently requires active interaction, continuous feedback, and experiential learning.

According to the collected data (Fig. 2), students identified effective communication (75.6%) and teamwork (73.2%) as the priority competencies for a modern professional. This confirms a strong student demand for the development of interactive skills and demonstrates a high level of alignment with global skills trends outlined in international analytical reports. In particular, World Economic Forum reports emphasise communication, collaboration, and interaction within multidisciplinary teams as critically important competencies in the context of digitalisation, remote employment, and the globalisation of work processes.

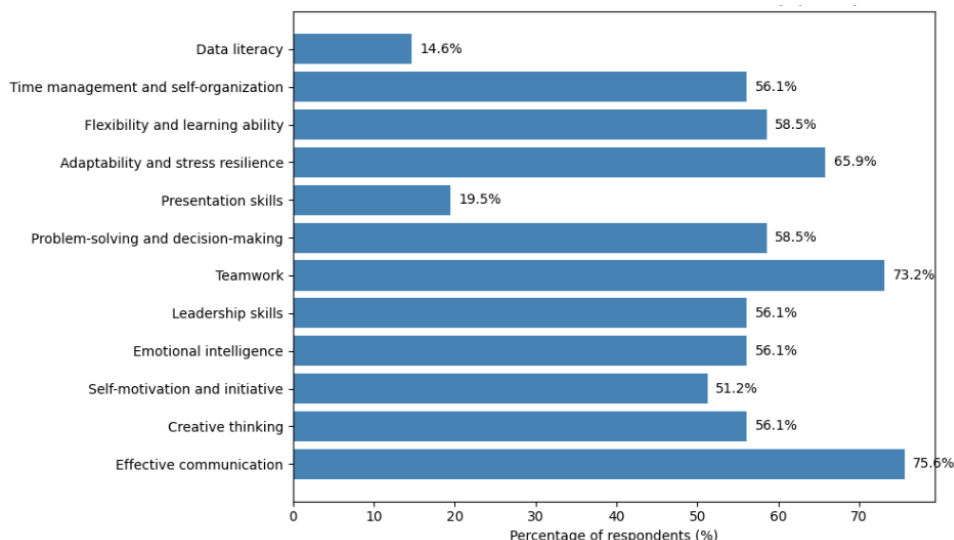


Fig. 2. Ranking of the most important soft skills based on a survey of students (n = 41).

A substantial proportion of respondents also emphasised adaptive qualities: 65.9% selected adaptability and stress resilience, which may be explained by the volatility

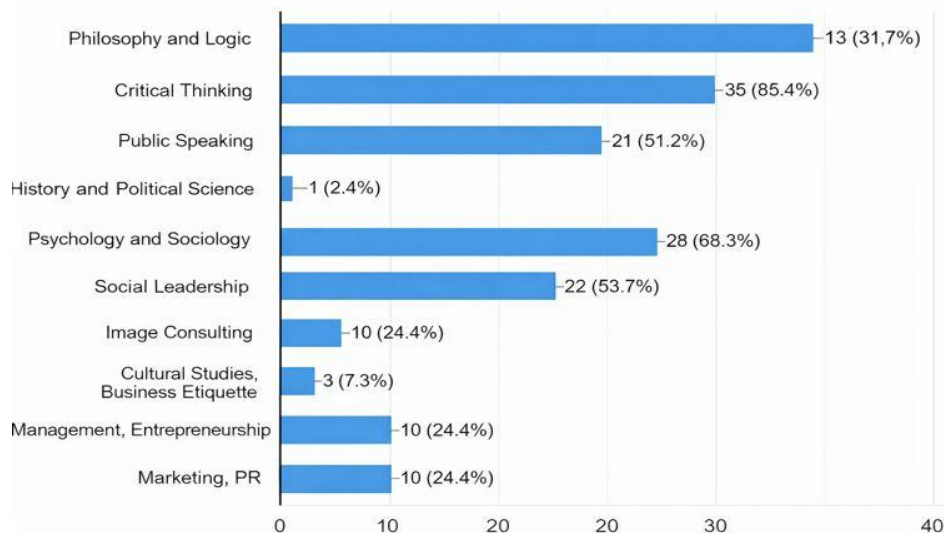
of the contemporary labour market and ongoing socio-economic challenges. High levels of support were also recorded for problem-solving and decision-making (58.5%) as

well as flexibility and lifelong learning capacity (58.5%). These findings correlate with the global emphasis on resilience, active learning, and complex problem-solving, which the World Economic Forum consistently identifies as among the fastest-growing skills in demand (WEF, 2025).

Creative thinking (56.1%), leadership qualities (56.1%), and emotional intelligence (56.1%) also occupied a prominent place in the student survey. Global trends similarly indicate a growing importance of human-centred skills that cannot be easily automated or replaced by artificial intelligence, further confirming the relevance of students' assessments. At the same time, presentation skills (19.5%)

and working with data sets (14.6%) were considered the least relevant. The latter may indicate that respondents clearly distinguish between universal soft skills and specialised instrumental competencies (hard skills).

The survey results demonstrate a clear student awareness of the interdisciplinary nature of soft skills formation (Fig. 3). When asked which disciplines contribute to the development of soft skills, the majority of respondents identified critical thinking (85.4%). This confirms the pivotal role of this discipline in fostering analytical capacity, argumentation skills, information evaluation, and evidence-based decision-making.



**Fig. 3. Ranking of disciplines contributing to soft skills development based on the student survey results**

High ratings were also attributed to psychology and sociology (68.3%), indicating the importance of socio-behavioural knowledge for the development of communication skills, empathy, and an understanding of group dynamics. Social leadership (53.7%) and public speaking (51.2%) likewise occupy a significant position, as they are directly related to the formation of public communication, influence, and teamwork skills.

A moderate level of support was recorded for applied disciplines such as management and entrepreneurship, as well as marketing and public relations (24.4%). This suggests that students perceive these courses primarily as instrumental for developing organisational, presentation, and strategic skills, although their contribution to soft skills formation is assessed as lower than that of humanities-based disciplines.

At the same time, the aggregated responses allow for the conclusion that students demonstrate a high level of awareness regarding the importance of soft skills for their professional future. An overwhelming majority of respondents consider these skills important or extremely important (87.8%) for their future career development, and participation in the course contributed to a re-evaluation of their role in both personal and professional growth. This confirms not only the applied but also the worldview-formative and reflective function of the course. In open-ended responses, students noted that the acquired experience helped them better understand their own strengths and weaknesses,

improve communication and self-presentation skills, develop a more balanced approach to work-life balance, and recognise the importance of emotional intelligence and intercultural interaction.

Overall, the survey results confirm that students' perceptions of the key soft skills required of a modern professional are current, relevant, and conceptually aligned with international labour market forecasts. This indicates the appropriateness of orienting educational programmes towards the development of communicative, adaptive, creative, and socio-emotional competencies as a foundation for graduates' professional competitiveness.

### Conclusion

The analysis of contemporary research and trends demonstrates that soft skills are not merely an important component of professional competence but a key factor in successful adaptation to the rapid changes and challenges of the modern world. These skills become particularly relevant in conditions of socio-economic instability, digital transformation, and intensified competition. In this context, the social sciences and humanities play a decisive role, as they not only shape worldview orientations and value frameworks but also foster the development of critical and creative thinking, emotional intelligence, communicative culture, and the capacity for adaptation and effective social interaction. The integration of humanities-based knowledge into the educational process thus emerges as

a strategic prerequisite for the comprehensive development of an individual capable of responsible and productive professional activity within complex social realities.

Accordingly, soft skills should be viewed not only as a set of communicative or leadership abilities but as an indicator of social maturity, humanitarian thinking, and value-based reflection. In the context of digital transformations, socio-humanitarian education provides a favourable environment for the development of these competencies through the cultivation of critical and creative thinking, emotional sensitivity, communicative flexibility, collaboration skills, and moral responsibility. In light of these considerations, universities of the future should not only actively implement digital technologies but also consistently preserve the humanistic mission of education – namely, the formation of reflective, empathetic, and socially responsible individuals. The systematic integration of soft skills into the content of socio-humanitarian training ensures a balance between technological efficiency and humanity, between algorithmic thinking and ethics, and between innovation and cultural values.

Summarising the research findings, it can be argued that the systematic integration of soft skills development into socio-humanitarian education is a necessary condition for the modernisation of higher education. The introduction of specialised courses such as *Soft Skills Technologies*, along with active, experiential, and interdisciplinary learning formats, contributes to the formation of a holistic, competitive, and socially responsible personality capable of effective professional performance. Thus, in contemporary society, soft skills should be regarded not only as an instrumental component of professional competence but as an integral manifestation of social maturity, the development of humanitarian thinking, and the capacity for value-based reflection within a digital and globalised reality.

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## Soft skills у соціогуманітарній освіті цифрової епохи: філософсько-освітній вимір

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У статті здійснено філософсько-освітній аналіз феномену soft skills у контексті соціогуманітарної освіти цифрової епохи. Актуальність дослідження зумовлена глибинними трансформаціями сучасного освітнього простору, спричиненими цифровізацією, глобалізаційними процесами та змінами характеру соціальної й професійної взаємодії. Обґрунтовано тезу про те, що гнучкі навички не можуть бути зведені до набору прикладних або суто інструментальних компетентностей, орієнтованих виключно на потреби ринку праці, а постають як багатовимірний соціокультурний феномен, пов'язаний із формуванням гуманітарної раціональності, ціннісної рефлексії, етичної відповідальності та здатності до усвідомленої комунікації.

Показано, що в умовах цифрової трансформації освіти зростає потреба в переосмисленні ролі соціогуманітарного знання як простору для розвитку критичного мислення, комунікативної компетентності, емоційного інтелекту, емпатії та моральної чутливості особистості. Соціогуманітарні дисципліни розглядаються як ключовий ресурс формування відповідальної суб'єктності здобувачів вищої освіти, здатних до рефлексивної взаємодії в умовах цифрових комунікацій, інформаційної перенасиченості та зростання етичних викликів.

Методологічну основу дослідження становлять філософсько-освітній аналіз, міждисциплінарний та аксіологічний підходи, а також методи емпіричного дослідження, спрямовані на виявлення потенціалу соціогуманітарних дисциплін для формування soft skills у здобувачів вищої освіти. На основі теоретичного осмислення та результатів емпіричного аналізу обґрунтовано значення соціогуманітарної освіти як визначального чинника розвитку соціальної зрілості, професійної адаптивності та здатності до відповідальної участі в суспільному житті в умовах цифрового суспільства. Зроблено висновок про необхідність інтеграції філософсько-ціннісного виміру у практики формування soft skills у сучасній вищій освіті.

**Ключові слова:** soft skills, соціогуманітарна освіта, цифрова епоха, філософія освіти, критичне мислення, професійна компетентність, гуманістична парадигма

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